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ABSTRACT

This study examined variations among Local Education Authorities (LEAs) in England in the levels of segregation of children with disabilities into special schools between the years 1982 and 1990. Major findings included the following: in 1990, English LEAs sent 1.58 percent of the school population to special schools; there were large differences between regions ranging from 0.62 percent (Cornwall) to 3.99 percent (inner London); 15 LEAs became significantly more segregated between 1982 and 1990; 46 LEAs became significantly less segregated over the same period; there was an overall trend toward integration of 8 percent; 22 LEAs significantly increased their use of independent special schools between 1982 and 1990; 29 LEAs significantly cut their use of the independent sector; and the Department of Education and Science ceased to collect some data (such as the number of children in special schools without statements of special need). A table provides data on the percentage of segregated children and the private sector export rate in each LEA in England for the years 1982, 1987, and 1990. (13 reference notes) (DB)

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SEGREGATION STATISTICS

English LEAs

Variations between LEAs in levels of segregation in special schools, 1982-1990

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By Will Swann

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Summary

- In January 1990 English LEAs sent 98,441 children aged 5 and over to special schools, according to this new analysis of data from the Department of Education and Science.
- This figure was 1.58% of their school population.
- Children's chances of segregation still vary enormously from one part of the country to another; Cornwall placed 0.62% in special schools while Knowsley had 2.79%. Lambeth and Hackney, two newly formed LEAs in inner London, had 3.99% and 3.42% in special schools.
- 81 of the 108 English LEAs had between 1 and 2 per cent of their school population in special schools.
- 15 LEAs became significantly more segregated beetween 1982-90 with Rotherham, Doncaster and St. Helen's doing so by more than 25%.
- Another group of 46 LEAs became significantly less segregated over the same period, with Bradford, Leeds and Richmond-upon-Thames leading the group, with reductions in the percentage of children in special schools of more than 40% over the 8 years.
- 22 LEAs significantly increased their use of independent special schools between 1982-90, with 6 of them more than doubling the rate at which they placed children in this sector (Ealing, Norfolk, Rotherham, St. Helens, Sandwell and Wigan).
- A further group of 29 LEAs significantly cut their use of the independent sector, 11 of them doing so by a reduction of more than 50%.
- Between 1982-90 there was a national "swing" towards integration of 8%.
- This study also reveals a disturbing change in the DES' collection of information from LEAs; in the earlier CSIE Factsheet (1989) 26 LEAs were shown to have large numbers of children in special schools without a statement (7 of them with more than 80% without a statement). In 1990 the DES had stopped collecting this information from LEAs, which it had earlier collected as a matter of routine.

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Introduction

This is a study of the way Local Education Authorities in England vary in the number of children they place in special schools. It reveals very large differences between LEAs. It shows that some LEAs rely more on special schools to meet the needs of children with learning difficulties and disabilities than they did eight years ago. But other LEAs place children in special schools much less often than they used to.

This is not the first time that LEA variations in special school placement have been studied. In 1989, CSIE published an analysis of variations between LEAs in their levels of segregation into special schools in its Factsheet: *Integration Statistics – LEAs reveal local variations*. In that study I compared special school statistics in 1982 and 1987. These were the key findings:

- The percentage of children attending special schools in 1987 varied between LEAs from 0.6 per cent to 2.8 per cent, although the great majority of LEAs had between 1 and 2 per cent of children in special schools.
- Between 1982 and 1987 just over one third of LEAs cut the percentage of children in special schools significantly. In one in nine LEAs the trend was in the opposite direction: these LEAs placed a larger percentage of pupils in special schools in 1987 than they did in 1982.
- More than a quarter of LEAs had a significant number of children placed in special schools without a statement of special educational needs – a practice that was in breach of the law.

In this report, I bring the last study up to date by comparing 1982 and 1987 with 1990.

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Why an update?

There are a number of reasons why an update is worth doing. First, it allows us to take a wider look at changes during the 1980s: to ask whether one of the principles of the 1981 Education Act – integrating children with special needs into mainstream schools – was put into effect in the decade that followed. Second, we need to know whether the LEAs that became more segregated between 1982 and 1987 continued on that path, or whether their policies and practices changed. Equally, did any LEAs which became less segregated between 1982 and 1987 change direction in the late 1980s? Third, 1990 was the year in which many of the changes brought about by the 1988 Education Reform Act began to have their effects in schools. It was the first year in which schools were funded using the formulas developed by LEAs under the Government's rules for Local Management of Schools. It was the year before the first National Curriculum assessments began. These changes, intended to foster competition between schools, have been seen as inimical to integration. 1990 is the baseline year against which we shall have to assess the effects of these changes. Finally, 1990 was the year in which one LEA – the Inner London Education Authority – died, and 13 new LEAs – the inner London boroughs – were born. We can now see the starting point for integration policies in these new authorities.

Measuring segregation

Tracking changes in integration and segregation is a difficult task. One way it might be tackled is to ask how many children there are in mainstream schools who have special needs, and how that number is changing. Unfortunately, there is no agreed definition of 'special needs', and no-one collects reliable figures on a national basis. What we do have is the number of children with Statements of Special Educational Needs in mainstream schools. Government ministers have often quoted the growth in the number of statemented children in mainstream schools as evidence of integration. They are wrong to do so. The reason is simple: there is nothing to stop an LEA issuing statements for children in ordinary schools whilst keeping the same number of children in special schools. And LEAs vary greatly in their propensity to issue statements to children with similar levels of need in mainstream schools.

The approach to measuring segregation in this report is different. It uses the percentage of the school population placed in special schools by each LEA. I shall call this *the percentage of segregated children* (see Col. 1 in **Table 1**). When I say that an LEA has become less segregated, I mean that the percentage of children it sends to special schools has gone down. The information to allow us to establish this figure for each LEA is collected by the LEAs and returned to the DES, annually.

There are a number of limitations to this way of measuring segregation. First of all, it does not present a complete picture of the ways in which children can be educated outside mainstream schools. Apart from special schools, there are off-site and on-site units, programmes run by Social Services departments, children excluded from school receiving home tuition, and children who simply 'leak' from the system as long term truants. A full picture of changes in segregation would take all these into account. Secondly, we know that some children who are on the register of special schools actually spend most, sometimes all, of their time in mainstream schools. In DES figures, these children appear to be segregated, but in fact they are not. We do not know how many children are educated in this way, but the available evidence suggests that it is only a very small proportion of special school pupils. Thirdly, the figures include all types of learning difficulty and disability. LEAs often adopt different policies towards the integration of different groups of pupils, which are masked by overall trends.

Fourth, and perhaps most important, is the difference between being in a mainstream school, and being well provided for and fully included in a mainstream school. The first does not guarantee the second, and so some people have argued that it is misleading to measure integration by changes in the special school population. Indeed many are worried that LEAs are closing special schools in order to save money, not to improve the education of the children. We need to know more than we do about the links between integration and expenditure policies. However, a special school place is no more of a *guarantee* of proper provision than is a mainstream place. Recently, some parts of the special school sector have been criticised by HMI for the quality of education they provide.

These are important cautions, but they do not render the analysis of special school statistics worthless. The figures in this report should be viewed as an indication of broad trends and as the first stage in more detailed enquiries which LEAs, voluntary organisations and parents' groups might take up locally.

As well as examining overall levels of segregation, I shall also look at the proportion of children from each LEA who attend private special schools. I refer to this as the *private sector export rate* (see Col. 2 in the **Table**). This is the number of children placed by an LEA in independent special schools, per 10,000 total school population in the LEA. These children are arguably the most segregated of all. Not only do they attend a special school, but they are away from their home community for long periods of time. LEAs who spend large sums of money to send children to such schools lose the opportunity to invest these funds in provision in their own schools.

The **Table** shows the percentage of segregated pupils and the private sector export rate for each LEA in England in 1982, 1987 and 1990. Significant decreases in segregation between 1982 and 1990 are marked with a downward arrow (↓) after the 1990 figure; significant increases in segregation are shown with an upward arrow (↑). The figures supplied for 1990 refer to pupils aged 5 and over only. The figures for 1982 cover all ages. This is a result of a change in the way the DES prepares its own statistics. It may have some effect on the comparison between 1990 and earlier years. There is a higher proportion of 2-4 year olds in mainstream schools than in special schools in England as a whole, so measuring overall segregation in 1990 using pupils aged five and over slightly overestimates the level of segregation. Nationally, the overestimation is likely to be around 0.03 per cent.

The national picture

In January 1990, LEAs in England sent 98,441 children aged 5 and over to special schools. That was 1.58 per cent of their school population. In 1982 there was a larger proportion of children in special schools - 1.72 per cent of the school population. In 1987 the figure stood at 1.65 per cent. Nationally, segregation into special schools has declined.

These figures tell us about the percentage of pupils who attend special schools at any one time. They include children who have been placed over several years before the date in question. Special schools get 'advanced warning' of trends in segregation via changes in the number of children they admit each year. This *inflow* into special schools is a more sensitive indicator of policy trends than the percentage of children in special schools. This measure is available nationally, but not, for the moment, locally. **Figure 1** shows the proportion of children of

primary and secondary age who moved into special schools between 1982 and 1988 (the latest year in which these figures can be calculated)".

Overall there was a drop in movement of primary aged children into special schools, but the pattern was uneven. The lowest rate of inflow was reached in 1986. There was much less change in the movement of secondary aged children into special schools. No clear trend down or up is discernable. These national results suggest that there may be similarly uneven patterns in movement into special schools in each LEA. Readers should bear this in mind in looking at the figures for individual LEAs.

How did LEAs vary in 1990?

Just as in 1982 and 1987, so in 1990 LEAs varied greatly in levels of segregation. Twenty-two LEAs had more than 2 per cent of children in special schools. Eleven of these were new Inner London boroughs. These LEAs now contain the highest levels of segregation in the country. Two of them exceeded 3 per cent of pupils in special schools: **Lambeth** (3.99 per cent) and **Hackney** (3.42 per cent).

Outside Inner London, the highest levels of segregation were in **Knowsley** (2.79 per cent), **Manchester** (2.55 per cent), **Liverpool** (2.22 per cent) and **Sandwell** (2.18 per cent). Three shire counties also exceeded two per cent of segregated pupils: **East Sussex** (2.06 per cent), **Hampshire** (2.09 per cent) and **Warwickshire** (2.03 per cent).

At the other end of the scale, five LEAs in 1990 has less than one per cent of pupils in special schools: **Cornwall** (0.62 per cent), **Cumbria** (0.73 per cent), **Barnsley** (0.78 per cent), **Leicestershire** (0.92 per cent), and **Calderdale** (0.98 per cent). But most LEAs – 81 out of 108 – had between one and two per cent of children in special schools.

So the most segregated authority in 1990 – **Lambeth** – had more than six times the percentage of pupils in special schools of the least segregated – **Cornwall.** However comparisons between such different LEAs should be made with caution. **Lambeth** has considerably higher levels of social deprivation than **Cornwall**, and we know that pupils in special schools are drawn disproportionately from disadvantaged families. At least some of the differences between LEAs will be due to differences in the nature of the children who attend their schools, rather than differences in policies. However, it is unlikely that socio-economic differences can fully account for all differences between LEAs: for example, a child is nearly three times as likely to attend a special school in **East Sussex** as in **Cumbria**.

Changes between 1982 and 1990

We might expect from the national pattern of results that more LEAs would have become less segregated than the reverse, and this is indeed what happened. Forty-six LEAs became significantly less segregated between 1982 and 1990, fifteen became significantly more segregated and thirty-four did not change significantly in either direction. LEAs which became significantly less segregated were disproportionately drawn from the Outer London boroughs. 70 per cent of Outer London boroughs cut their percentage of segregated children, compared to 39 per cent of metropolitan districts and 46 per cent of shire counties. The complementary pattern applies to LEAs that became significantly more segregated. Only one out of 20 Outer London boroughs – **Ealing** – moved in this direction, compared to 22 per cent of metropolitan districts and 15 per cent of shire counties.

Of the forty-six LEAs which became significantly less segregated, fifteen cut their level of segregation by more than 25 per cent: **Bradford** (43.3 per cent), **Leeds** (43.0 per cent), **Richmond upon Thames** (42.3 per cent), **Barking** (35.6 per cent), **Barnsley** (35.0 per cent), **Sheffield** (34.4 per cent), **Solihull** (34.2 per cent), **Waltham Forest** (32.4 per cent), **Havering** (32.1 per cent), **Cumbria** (31.5 per cent), **Cleveland** (30.1 per cent), **Salford** (29.2 per cent), **Newcastle** (27.5 per cent), **Oxfordshire** (25.7 per cent), and **Somerset** (25.5 per cent).

Of the fifteen LEAs which became significantly more segregated three did so by more than 25 per cent. The fifteen are **Rotherham** (32.8 per cent), **Doncaster** (32.7 per cent), **St. Helens** (28.3 per cent), **Knowsley** (24.2 per cent), **Bolton** (22.8 per cent), **West Sussex** (20.7 per cent), **Kent** (16.5 per cent), **Sandwell** (16.0 per cent), **Ealing** (14.5 per cent), **Wigan** (15.1 per cent), **Norfolk** (9.8 per cent), **Wirral** (9.4 per cent), **Warwickshire** (8.9 per cent), **Lancashire** (5.6 per cent), and **Hampshire** (4.3 per cent).

Changes since 1987

In the study which compared 1982 and 1987 I identified eleven LEAs that had become significantly more segregated. Three of these LEAs have since reversed the trend. Between 1987 and 1990, **Hampshire, Hereford** and **Worcester** and **Nottinghamshire** significantly reduced their percentage of children in special schools. But four of the eleven have continued to add significantly to their levels of segregation: **Doncaster, Rotherham, St. Helens and West Sussex**. Five LEAs showed significant increases in segregation between 1982 and 1990 which did not show significant increases between 1982 and 1987: **Bolton, Knowsley, Lancashire, Sandwell** and **Wigan**. All except Bolton showed increases in segregation from 1982 to 1987 that were not statistically significant.

Thirty of the thirty-six LEAs that became significantly less segregated between 1982 and 1987 have continued this trend up to 1990. However, four of them: **Bury, Durham, North Tyneside** and **Walsall** have reversed direction to the extent that they do not show any significant change comparing 1982 with 1990. In one case – **Bolton** there was a significant cut in segregation between 1982 and 1987 which was reversed between 1987 and 1990 to the extent that the LEA was more segregated in 1990 than it was in 1982.

Segregation into independent special schools

In January 1990 there were 11,812 children placed by LEAs in independent special schools. That is 12 per cent of the special school population. There are very large variations in the use LEAs make of the independent special school sector. In 1990, nineteen LEAs had private sector export rates of less than 10 per 10,000 total school population. By comparison twenty-one LEAs had private sector export rates of more than 30 per 10,000 total school population.

Ealing is at one extreme. In 1990, out of a school population aged over five of 32,566, **Ealing** sent 203 children (0.62 per cent) to independent special schools.

Table 1

Percentage of Segregated Children and Private Sector Export Rate in each LEA in England, 1982, 1987 and 1990

Key: ↑ = significant increase in segregation, 1982-1990
↓ = significant decrease in segregation, 1982-1990

	Col. 1 Per cent of Segregated Children			Col. 2 Private Sector Export Rate No. per 10,000 children		
LEA (108 in England)	*1982*	*1987*	*1990*	*1982*	*1987*	*1990*
England	1.72	1.65	**1.58**	19.4	18.1	**19.0**
Non Metropolitan Counties	*1982*	*1987*	*1990*	*1982*	*1987*	*1990*
Avon	1.85	1.79	1.77	20.9	12.2	14.9 ↓
Bedfordshire	1.52	1.60	1.58	15.5	16.6	18.3
Berkshire	1.83	1.79	1.66 ↓	26.2	26.4	26.1
Buckinghamshire	2.17	1.97	1.89 ↓	20.6	14.9	17.0 ↓
Cambridgeshire	1.55	1.33	1.17 ↓	11.1	7.2	12.3
Cheshire	1.32	1.31	1.17 ↓	13.7	23.8	21.7 ↑
Cleveland	2.15	1.89	1.50 ↓	11.7	8.4	9.8
Cornwall	0.66	0.62	0.62	15.6	13.6	12.9
Cumbria	1.07	0.87	0.73 ↓	14.2	14.9	12.4
Derbyshire	1.44	1.30	1.17 ↓	9.0	10.0	11.0
Devon	1.77	1.75	1.57 ↓	38.0	39.0	25.8 ↓
Dorset	1.61	1.65	1.62	28.0	27.9	26.9
Durham	1.42	1.28	1.37	10.6	8.9	12.8
East Sussex	1.97	2.02	2.06	43.5	28.7	33.1 ↓
Essex	1.56	1.57	1.50	17.8	24.2	23.9 ↑
Gloucestershire	1.88	1.79	1.83	26.6	14.6	15.1 ↓
Hampshire	2.00	2.22	2.09 ↑	34.3	38.6	35.2
Hereford and Worcester	1.39	1.55	1.43	15.2	15.5	13.2
Hertfordshire	1.82	1.66	1.57 ↓	19.3	21.8	25.3 ↑
Humberside	1.23	1.16	1.06 ↓	6.2	7.3	8.5 ↑
Isle of Wight	1.64	1.65	1.77	24.4	24.7	25.9
Kent	1.60	1.82	1.87 ↑	25.4	27.4	28.8 ↑
Lancashire	1.86	1.92	1.96 ↑	24.5	27.1	32.4 ↑
Leicestershire	1.09	1.03	0.92 ↓	7.0	5.5	6.2
Lincolnshire	1.69	1.66	1.56 ↓	20.1	19.1	18.0
Norfolk	0.92	1.05	1.01 ↑	6.7	11.3	13.6 ↑
North Yorkshire	1.36	1.38	1.31	21.6	17.0	17.2 ↓
Northamptonshire	1.67	1.56	1.39 ↓	12.7	10.6	12.3
Northumberland	1.48	1.39	1.39	12.1	10.5	11.8
Nottinghamshire	1.69	1.80	1.65	13.4	14.0	14.3
Oxfordshire	1.51	1.24	1.12 ↓	32.5	13.0	11.2 ↓
Shropshire	1.25	1.23	1.11 ↓	11.2	9.7	9.5
Somerset	1.63	1.33	1.21 ↓	25.4	22.6	19.4 ↓
Staffordshire	1.48	1.42	1.37 ↓	9.2	5.3	4.5 ↓
Suffolk	1.09	1.13	1.08	19.8	23.4	23.8 ↑
Surrey	2.29	1.98	1.74 ↓	46.8	27.1	26.3 ↓
Warwickshire	1.86	2.09	2.03 ↑	17.0	21.1	16.1
West Sussex	1.39	1.52	1.68 ↑	19.5	22.6	34.1 ↑
Wiltshire	1.24	1.29	1.33	28.4	28.8	38.4 ↑
Inner London						
ILEA	2.80	2.52	–	12.4	7.3	—
City of London	–	–	2.78	–	–	0.0
Camden	–	–	1.79	–	–	19.6
Greenwich	–	–	2.21	–	–	11.0
Hackney	–	–	3.42	–	–	16.7
Hammersmith & Fulham	–	–	2.47	–	–	23.3
Islington	–	–	2.12	–	–	14.1
Kensington	–	–	2.58	–	–	24.5
Lambeth	–	–	3.99	–	–	22.5
Lewisham	–	–	2.23	–	–	13.4
Southwark	–	–	2.56	–	–	10.6
Tower Hamlets	–	–	2.08	–	–	6.6
Wandsworth	–	–	2.57	–	–	24.5
Westminster	–	–	1.97	–	–	19.0

Source: DES Forms 7, 7M, 8A (Schools) and 8B (Schools).

Table 1 (cont.)

Percentage of Segregated Children and Private Sector Export Rate in each LEA in England, 1982, 1987 and 1990

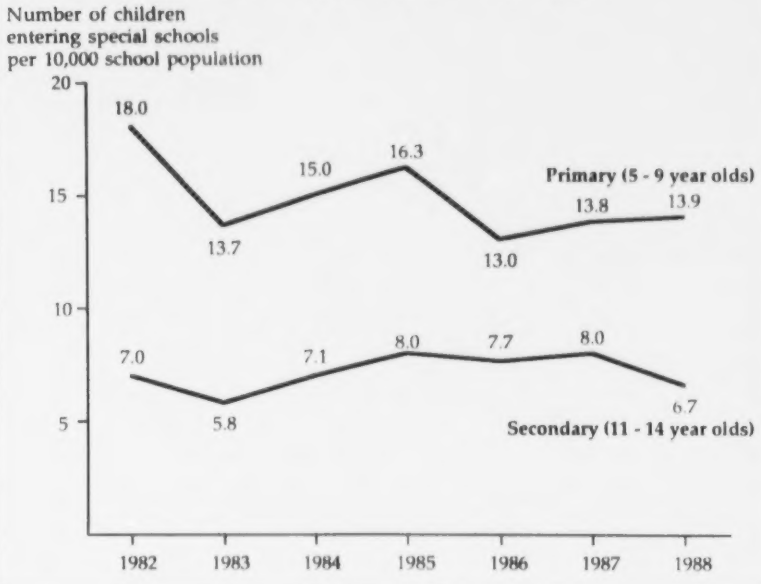
Key: ↑ = significant increase in segregation, 1982-1990
↓ = significant decrease in segregation, 1982-1990

	Col. 1 Per cent of Segregated Children			Col. 2 Private Sector Export Rate No. per 10,000 children		
LEA (108 in England)	*1982*	*1987*	*1990*	*1982*	*1987*	*1990*
England	1.72	1.65	**1.58**	19.4	18.1	**19.0**
Outer London						
Barking	1.76	1.33	1.13 ↓	38.1	17.5	14.4 ↓
Barnet	1.52	1.39	1.29 ↓	40.4	33.8	28.1 ↓
Bexley	1.79	1.73	1.42 ↓	40.8	42.3	38.6
Brent	2.23	1.79	1.72 ↓	47.1	35.6	32.2 ↓
Bromley	1.71	1.23	1.38 ↓	36.0	24.7	30.4
Croydon	1.92	1.85	1.74 ↓	47.5	47.3	39.0 ↓
Ealing	1.83	2.12	2.09 ↑	31.0	47.7	62.3 ↑
Enfield	1.78	1.63	1.56 ↓	28.7	22.5	21.8 ↓
Haringey	2.29	2.14	1.92 ↓	52.8	46.4	34.4 ↓
Harrow	1.57	1.74	1.44	54.7	55.2	31.2 ↓
Havering	1.56	1.37	1.06 ↓	22.3	15.7	18.1
Hillingdon	2.01	1.73	1.69 ↓	21.7	28.9	30.5 ↑
Hounslow	2.22	2.10	2.04	29.8	31.2	32.6
Kingston upon Thames	1.97	1.83	2.01	55.6	41.9	52.3
Merton	2.15	2.04	1.91	20.7	29.0	25.7
Newham	2.19	1.97	1.66 ↓	29.3	12.4	12.0 ↓
Redbridge	1.90	2.03	1.93	51.1	56.4	41.0 ↓
Richmond upon Thames	2.37	1.41	1.37 ↓	38.9	14.3	11.3 ↓
Sutton	2.12	2.08	1.74 ↓	64.6	55.6	32.1 ↓
Waltham Forest	2.06	1.77	1.39 ↓	6.7	8.8	11.2 ↑
Metropolitan Districts						
Birmingham	1.87	1.76	1.73 ↓	9.6	6.9	7.2 ↓
Coventry	2.16	1.90	1.94 ↓	6.0	7.9	6.0
Dudley	1.52	1.49	1.53	5.3	7.9	8.8 ↑
Sandwell	1.88	2.02	2.18 ↑	3.3	3.3	7.2 ↑
Solihull	1.63	1.18	1.07 ↓	18.2	9.6	12.5
Walsall	1.54	1.35	1.44	4.5	3.3	5.1
Wolverhampton	1.68	1.40	1.35 ↓	6.6	6.3	6.0
Knowsley	2.24	2.42	2.79 ↑	19.4	16.2	13.4
Liverpool	2.20	2.18	2.22	7.6	8.8	13.0 ↑
St Helens	1.65	1.85	2.11 ↑	15.0	30.2	33.6 ↑
Sefton	1.34	1.25	1.32	24.1	27.0	29.5
Wirral	1.68	1.80	1.84 ↑	23.8	17.4	28.1
Bolton	1.54	1.40	1.89 ↑	22.4	16.7	21.4
Bury	1.63	1.39	1.65	23.1	25.9	23.4
Manchester	2.95	2.80	2.55 ↓	17.4	22.2	17.5
Oldham	1.79	1.56	1.56 ↓	11.1	4.2	10.4
Rochdale	1.97	1.90	1.93	18.3	13.1	13.1
Salford	2.55	2.27	1.81 ↓	6.5	4.0	6.0
Stockport	1.44	1.35	1.36	32.0	32.2	32.6
Tameside	1.51	1.50	1.49	20.4	11.0	5.5 ↓
Trafford	1.66	1.72	1.55	15.1	11.0	16.8
Wigan	1.58	1.64	1.82 ↑	10.3	20.0	20.8 ↑
Barnsley	1.19	0.95	0.78 ↓	11.3	9.1	4.3 ↓
Doncaster	1.35	1.60	1.80 ↑	8.3	11.0	15.4 ↑
Rotherham	1.41	1.63	1.88 ↑	8.8	15.6	30.1 ↑
Sheffield	1.93	1.33	1.27 ↓	4.8	2.8	1.8 ↓
Bradford	1.95	1.44	1.10 ↓	14.3	3.4	2.3 ↓
Calderdale	0.97	1.03	0.98	13.4	10.4	11.9
Kirklees	1.25	1.15	1.28	7.3	8.8	12.6 ↑
Leeds	1.96	1.49	1.12 ↓	15.6	5.6	1.6 ↓
Wakefield	1.84	1.95	1.68 ↓	10.6	20.0	21.0 ↓
Gateshead	1.69	1.73	1.68	10.7	11.9	15.7 ↑
Newcastle on Tyne	2.36	1.90	1.71 ↓	25.2	12.6	16.2 ↓
North Tyneside	1.95	1.72	1.76	26.7	19.6	30.0
South Tyneside	1.72	1.62	1.69	17.6	15.3	17.4
Sunderland	1.73	1.54	1.56 ↓	12.0	11.7	14.1

Leeds is at the other extreme. Out of a school population aged over five of 92,800 it sent just 15 children (0.02 per cent) to independent special schools. This means that a child in **Ealing** is over thirty times more likely to go to an independent special school than a child in **Leeds.**

Of the ninety-five LEAs for which we have results in 1982 and 1990, in forty-four there was no significant change in the proportion of children placed in independent special schools. Twenty-nine LEAs significantly cut their use of independent special schools between 1982 and 1990. Eleven of these did so by more than 50 per cent: **Barking, Barnsley, Bradford, Leeds, Newham, Oxfordshire, Richmond, Sheffield, Staffordshire, Sutton** and **Tameside**. But in the same period, twenty-two LEAs significantly increased their use of this sector. Six of these more than doubled their private sector export rate: **Ealing, Norfolk, Rotherham, St. Helens, Sandwell** and **Wigan**, although in **Sandwell**'s case from a very low starting point. In some LEAs, despite an overall drop in pupil numbers since 1982, there were actually *more* children going to independent special schools in 1990 than in 1982.

Figure 1
Number of primary and secondary aged children entering special schools per 10,000 total school population, 1982 - 1988, England



Children in special schools without statements

In the 1989 Factsheet, I showed that in twenty-six LEAs more than 10 per cent of pupils in special schools in 1986 did not have statements of special educational need. Seven of these LEAs – **Doncaster, Gloucestershire, Hereford and Worcester, Manchester, Merton, Solihull** and **Wigan** – had more than 80 per cent of children in special schools *without* a statement. This was clearly against the law. As a result of this study, the DES asked for further information from a number of LEAs about children in special schools without statements.[1] It is therefore worrying to discover that in 1990 the DES did not collect this information from LEAs, as it had as a matter of routine in 1986.[2] Moreover, the DES has recently issued statistics in response to parliamentary questions which give a wholly misleading impression that 'all pupils in special schools are assumed to have statements'.[3] The DES cannot know whether this is true or not, since it stopped collecting the information. As a result they, and we, are unable to tell whether those LEAs which had very large numbers of children in special schools without statements have since put their houses in order.

Conclusions

The main conclusions of the 1989 Factsheet have been confirmed by this update:

- Children's chances of segregation (and integration) vary a great deal from one part of the country to another.
- Since 1982, some LEAs have considerably reduced the level of segregation into special schools, but a smaller number have done the opposite.
- Since 1982, some LEAs have considerably reduced the proportion of children they send to independent special schools, but a smaller number have done the opposite.

Nationally the gradual trend towards integration is now well established: in England between 1982 and 1990 there was a 8.1 per cent "swing" towards more integration across all LEAs. Some LEAs have made dramatic changes in their policies and provision since the 1981 Education Act came into force. But others have shown a consistent pattern of rising segregation both within LEAs and outside them. No doubt in some cases this has been disguised by a decline in pupil numbers that has occured in all schools, but has been greater in mainstream schools than in special schools. When presented with evidence of increased segregation, some LEAs have responded with the view that change needs to be gradual. One such LEA (**Knowsley**) which has the declared aim of maintaining as many pupils as possible in mainstream schools said that it preferred an 'evolutionary approach to creating the conditions for successful integration'.[4] Yet this is an LEA which has evolved in the opposite direction to its professed aim, and has become significantly more segregated. Whatever the limitations of the results in this report, and there are several, they provide the beginnings of a factual basis against which the claims of LEAs can be assessed. The value of the report, will therefore depend to a great extent on its use 'on the ground' in local areas.

The continuing variation between LEAs in their special education policies and provision means that children's and parents' experience of special education depends in part on where they live. This surely should not be a relevant factor in decision making where there are such vital interests at stake. It was partly because the Government was so concerned about the differences in the quality of education for children living in different parts of the country that it introduced a national curriculum. Yet it remains wedded to the view that integration policies should be left to LEAs.[5] (Although the DES is more than willing to give detailed advice to LEAs on many other aspects of special education policy.)

The effects of the 1988 Education Reform Act may make it increasingly difficult for LEAs to develop and sustain coherent integration policies, and so the fear must be, not simply that the irrational variations in provision will continue, but that even in LEAs where there has been real progress towards integration, segregation may start to climb again in the 1990s. Continued vigilance from committed parents, professionals, voluntary bodies and politicians will be ever more important. □

Notes

1 SWANN, W. (1989) Integration Statistics – LEAs reveal local variations. London, Centre for Studies on Integration in Education.

2 The full details of how this figure is calculated for each LEA are given in Swann (1989) (See Note 1). Briefly, it includes all children attending the LEA's own special schools except those placed by other LEAs and all the children placed in special schools outside the LEA. It covers children of all ages, and is expressed as a percentage of all children in the LEA's own schools.

3 JOWETT, S., HEGARTY, S. AND MOSES, D. (1988) Joining Forces: a study of links between special and ordinary schools. Windsor, NFER-Nelson.

4 DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE (1989) *A survey of Provision for Pupils with Emotional/Behavioural Difficulties in Maintained Special Schools and Units*. London, DES. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE (1989) *Educating Physically Disabled Pupils*. London, DES.

5 The results for 1990 were included in a preliminary report issued by CSIE in February 1991. In some cases, the figures in the Table vary slightly from those in the preliminary report as a result of refinements in the analysis. In no case does this affect the conclusions drawn in the preliminary report about the general pattern of results or individual LEAs.

6 'Significant' in this report means statistically significant. Statistical significance is measured in this study using the normal approximation to the binomial distribution. All results shown as significant are significant at $p<0.02$, two tailed. This fairly stringent test was chosen given the large total number of comparisons.

7 DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE (1990) Statistics of Education (Schools) 1989. London, DES.

8 The full details of how these figures are calculated are given in SWANN, W. (1988) 'Trends in special school placement to 1986: measuring, assessing and explaining segregation'. *Oxford Review of Education*, 14(2), pp. 139-161.

9 Hansard, 14 July 1989, Col. 668.

10 Hansard, 29 January 1991, Col 453.

11 Hansard, 17th December 1990, Col 33.

12 *Times Educational Supplement*, 8 March, 1991, (page 22).

13 DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE (1989) *Assessment and Statements of Special Educational Needs: procedures within Education, Health and Social Services*. Circular 22/89. London, HMSO.

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Copies of the earlier CSIE Factsheet, "Integration statistics – LEAs reveal local variations" are available price £2.00 (incl. postage and package) from CSIE.

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